



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21



Eastern Shore
Family Resource Association

June 9th, 2021
7:00pm - 7:30pm



Board of Directors 2020 – 2021

Laura Rockwood
Chair

Katie Simms
Vice-Chair

Melissa Bayers
Treasurer

Denise Surette
Secretary

Kaitlyn Hines
Director

Samantha Wood
Director

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	3
Letter from the Board Chair & the Executive Director	4&5
Highlights	6-12
Bookworms at Play	6
Breast Pump Loan Program	6
December Virtual Play Dates	7
Great Expectations	7
Healthy Beginnings	8
New Parent Group	9
Play Dates Are Us (March Break Days)	9
Parenting Journey Support Program	10-11
Wee Bears	12
Graphs	13
Attendance at all 2020-21 Locations	13
Percentages of 2020-21 Group Attendance	13
Community Partnerships	14-15



“Through our programs and services, the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association supports children, youth and families, and contributes to the quality of family life in our community.”



Eastern Shore Family Resource Centre

Staff 2020 - 2021

Executive Director

Nancy Hollis

Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visitor, Breastfeeding Support and Great Expectations

Samantha Vatcher

Parenting Journey Family Support Home Visitor and Early Childhood Educator Program Supervisor

Tracy Cowan

Program Facilitator and Early Childhood Educator

Anna Cannings

Program Facilitator

Alexis Cavanagh-Myers

Program Facilitator and Early Childhood Educator

Sarah Harnish

Program Facilitator

Shelby Riley

Program Facilitator

Shelley Josey

Program Facilitator and Early Childhood Educator

Susan Corkum

Program Facilitator

Wanda Bellefontaine

Bookkeeper & Administrator

Tara González



Board Chair and Execu

Dear Friends,

When January 1, 2020 began who would have ever imagine we would still be responding to a pandemic and operating remotely 18 months later. The 2020-2021 year began strong and finished strong, despite COVID-19, thanks to a hardworking, dedicated team of professionals and the effective governance of our Board of Directors.

The 2020-2021 Program Year was operated quite differently this year. Safety measures were put in place to ensure we followed the Occupational Health and Safety Plan in regards to Covid-19. This was done to protect staff, clients, stakeholders, and members of the public from the spread of COVID-19. Programs were offered both virtually and in-person with smaller group sizes to ensure we followed proper protocols. Our home visiting services were done either by phone, virtual or in-person (when permitted) to ensure our families needs were being met. The ESFRA participated in *two Food Initiative Programs (Isolation Initiative and Out of school Initiative)* funded by the Department of Community Services to assist with families in need of groceries during these difficult times. Families were provided with Christmas support through one of the grants we received to ensure families had a good holiday season without worry of any extra financial burden to the family.

There have been many positive financial highlights throughout 2020-2021; we were successful in acquiring some new funding, such as [Food Banks Canada](#), [United Way Recovery](#), the [Diversity and Community Capacity Fund/Cultural Communities and Identities Fund](#), [YMCA Micro Grant](#) and a [Small Business Impact Grant](#) to name a few.

The Eastern Shore Family Resource Association acknowledges and thanks our current funders: [Department of Community Services](#), [Nova Scotia Health Authority](#), [Department of Labour and Advanced Education \(FLIEF\)](#) for their continuous financial support in our community. We also want to thank our donors whether it be in-kind or financial for your support.

The Eastern Shore Family Resource Association obtained the services of Max Chauvin to lead us through Strategic Planning to help develop long-term strategies for the success of the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association over the next three years. On Wednesday, April 21, 2021, the Board of Directors and senior staff gathered to consider the organization's long-term future and develop a series of strategic priorities to help it move forward.

Why?

Strategic planning is the process of reviewing the mission & vision of an organization while setting priorities for the next three to five years. The ESFRA has been a part of the Eastern Shore community since 1994, and continues evolve with the needs of the community. While the ESFRA rebranded 6 years ago our mission remains the same, "Through our programs and services, the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association supports children, youth and families and contributes to the quality of family life in our community." Not only has the FRC changed and grown a lot as an organization in the last 27 years, but the community has too.

Survey

The ESFRA consulted participants of the Centre with a survey to identify what we are doing well and what we could improve upon. When asked what the centre meant to them, and what we do well, respondents overwhelmingly talked about social connection and a safe and welcoming space for all. The suggested areas for

Executive Director's Message

improvement and focus for what the ESFRA were expanding services for children and youth, expanding programming further East, acquiring a more accessible space (GROUND LEVEL), providing mental health information and supports and more opportunities in the community for families to connect.

What's the plan?

Participants, staff and our board of directors identified three major strategic priorities or areas of emphasis for the next several years if the dreams and hopes of the Board and staff are to be realized.

A Suitable Location	Community Connection and Engagement	Programming for everyone in the family (newborn – 99 years of age)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Eastern Shore Family Resource Association has an accessible location that allows us to expand the programs and services we offer to meet the changing needs of our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Everyone in our community knows who the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association is, where we are located, what we do, and its potential impact on their family and our community.We are a part of a robust and supportive network of community organizations on the Eastern Shore that increases our impact on those who need us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Eastern Shore Family Resource Association offers programs and services for all members of the family.

We want to say **thank you and farewell to Samantha Vatcher** (Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visitor) for her dedication and commitment to our families and agency over the past two years. She is not going far as she has taken a position with Chebucto Family Resource Centre as their Healthy Beginnings Home Visitor. Sam will be missed.

We want to wish **Alexis Cavanagh-Myers** the best in her future studies at Memorial University this coming Fall. **Shelby Riley** will continue with ESFRA this summer for our Summer Day Camp Program but has been accepted into the Social Work Program at Dalhousie starting in the Fall of 2021. All the best Shelby in your future studies.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our amazing volunteer Board of Directors for their leadership and determined efforts. We are extremely fortunate and truly appreciate all of the hard work you do on behalf of the Family Resource Centre.

And finally, ESFRA would not be able to offer the amazing programs and services we do without our dedicated professional staff. Every day their support and effort on behalf of the Eastern Shore families continues to amaze us. Thank you as it is such an honour to work with devoted staff like yourselves.

With Kindest Regards,

Nancy Hollis
Executive Director

Laura Rockwood
Board Chair



Bookworms at Play



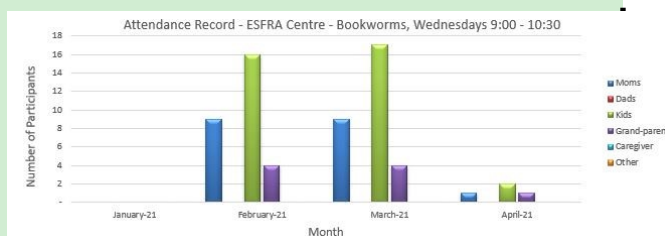
Bookworms at Play is ESFRA's signature Family Literacy Program for Parents/Caregivers & Children ages 3 – 5 years. This program places emphasis on family literacy through conscious Parent/Caregiver & Child interactive components, allowing families to share the preschool experience together both in class and at home.

ESFRA offered the January to May sessions from the Family Centre in Porters Lake. While Covid-19 kept us from having the higher participant numbers as in the past, participants enrolled were very enthusiastic for the program.

ESFRA Centre: Our Bookworms group usually creates an annual "Memories" book by creating items throughout the program's running. As the time was limited this year, books were not completed but the good times will never be forgotten.

All Bookworms enjoyed creating some of their own stories using "Story Sticks", painting to music, exploring our Jump Jiggle Jive equipment, plus anything our spaces had to offer for the children to explore.

- * One families comments included, "we really enjoyed the program".
- * Another parent noted that "while the pandemic was on, we really appreciated that ESFRA was able to put on some programming in person as well as virtual".



Since 2015 the Eastern Shore Family Resource Centre has supported Breast Feeding families with not only programs, but also a lending program to aid nursing moms.



Breast Pump Loan Program

Being overseen by our Healthy Beginnings Home Visitor, Sam Vatcher, this year we had the opportunity to lend our 2 Breast Pumps to 4 nursing mothers for longer periods of time.



We hope to continue supporting this natural method of feeding, bonding and nurturing in 2021-22.

December Virtual Play Dates

Our doors may have been closed to the public but that provided ESFRA staff an opportunity to get creative on how to deliver programs virtually. Kicking off what was the beginnings of the virtual world at ESFRA, were 3 December Virtual Play Dates (part of our Play Dates Are Us! programs).



Each week's had it's own themed craft:

- * Week 1 was creating your own Snowman
- * Week 2 was decorating your own Gingerbread cookie
- * Week 3 was designing your own Reindeer.



Packages were provided to each of the participants in advance based on their selections during the "ticketing" process. Choosing their pick up time allowed all parties a safe and smooth method for supply pick up. While Covid numbers were a little lower at that time, Safety remained a top priority. And based on the smiles in camera, fun and safety went hand in hand.

As the old saying states, "And this too shall pass". It almost goes without saying, this pandemic has taught us more creative ways of programming to meet the needs of all families in our community.

A huge **THANK YOU** to Tracey's Tasty Treats for the donation of the gingerbread cookies.



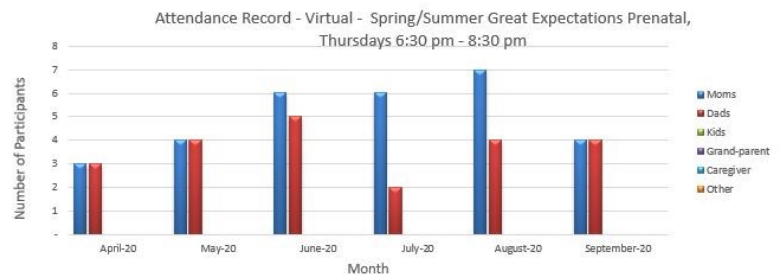
Great Expectations Prenatal Program

The 2020-21 program year for our Great Expectations Pre-natal program was facilitated by Samantha Vatcher, our Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visitor, via Zoom.

Our eight week programs held in the Spring & Fall of 2020 and Winter & Spring of 2021, were relaxed, interactive and informative. Typically families participating are only from our Eastern Shore area but as the opportunity to participate virtually became available, classes were attended by families from other areas of Nova Scotia.

The program strived to create a balance between important information that is current best practice while allowing time for families to openly share their concerns and stories as their comfort allowed. Also, some opportunities were open for one on one discussions.

Everyone at ESFRA is looking forward to having both in person and virtual programs available in the upcoming 2021-22 year.



The Healthy Beginnings program started out the year with **in-home visits** as normal but quickly shifted to virtual and/or over the phone visits in mid March 2020 and continued this way until summer. August saw **outside socially distanced visits** introduced which continued into the autumn, before going back to virtual or phone only visits for another period of time.



Over this past year, our **families have shown incredible resilience and adaptability** with all of the changes in our world and program(s). The “**Growing Great Kids***” curriculum which HB uses, started sending out parent newsletters to be passed along to families. They contained creative ways for parents to keep their littles busy with fun developmentally appropriate activities during quarantine as well as tips for parenting during these unprecedented times.

Some families chose to wait (to have visits during the periods in which we were able to see each other in person with the covid safety protocols) but most families were **very keen** to keep Healthy Beginnings going through phone or virtual meetings.

Home Visitors continued to provide curriculum and activities by either dropping off, mailing or emailing handouts and necessary materials. Visits could still be quite interactive and have those special joyful moments with parents and their babes, especially during the virtual visits.

Some might ask - *How could you be interactive while separate?*

A few examples of this interaction would be “**GKK**” activities like: **Baby Giggles**, **Hide & Seek**, **Traditional Songs** and having **Dance Parties**.

With **Baby Giggles** and **Hide & Seek**, moms would take the phone with them to hide so I could also see when babe found mom and the big laughter or smiles mom and babe would have.

Also during a **Dance Party** or **Traditional Songs**, the phone was set up so mom and babe could see me dancing or singing as well; which seemed to help with any reluctance after they saw how silly I was dancing or singing.

Healthy Beginnings **supported 16 clients** over this past year and has a **current caseload of 14**.

Some might ask - *What can I gain be being a part of this program?*

- breast-feeding goals (surpassing expectations)
- concrete knowledge of community resources and how to access them
- best practices for keeping children safe
- the benefits of creating responsive care routines
- the expansion of family literacy
- solid information on Public Health resources
- understanding of infant milestones and physical literacy
- how to promote optimal brain development
- in-depth knowledge in all areas of child development
- parent/child attachment

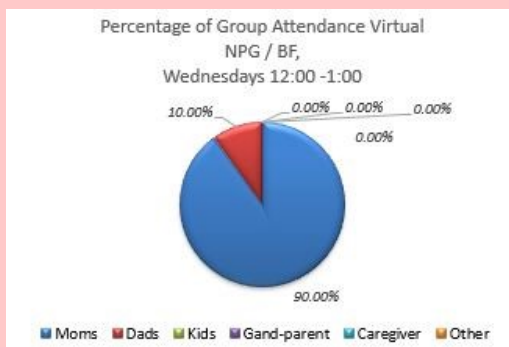
The Nova Scotia Health Authority gave the HB Home Visitors additional tools which provided families a more secure Zoom meeting as well as continuing to keep in touch by doing by-weekly meetings via Zoom. Eventually HB Home Visitors started reflective supervision weekly with the Healthy Beginnings Coordinator. Meetings were either in person, when the Covid safety protocols allowed, or via Zoom.

Our Public Health Nurses, Tanya Wagner-Wile and Marlene MacPhail collaborated often with our Enhanced Home Visitor to provide support and shared messages of medical origin unavailable to the Healthy Beginnings EHV. This **team approach** was an asset to all the families attending Family Resource and its programs.

*The “**Great Kids INC**” curriculum modules to: define milestones, provide play based activities, offer effective tools for parenting with intention while highlighting the “why” for development of a growing baby.



NEW



NEW PARENT GROUP 2020-21

was a program greatly affected by the pandemic. Unfortunately there were a couple of tentative start dates for the in person programming that did not see fulfillment.

Protocols for safety did not allow us to bring in children under 12 months for this current year.

What was amazing to see, despite the challenges, were the number of families looking to participate in the program .



We tackled a new way of registering this year and families were motivated to keep on finding new ways to do things.

While facing challenges initially, ESFRA offered programming virtually being facilitated by Samantha Vatcher (Healthy Beginnings Home Visitor) .



Dr. Honeydew - Beaker, based on my analysis of the situation, the hypothesis was correct -

Science is Fun, **fun**, Fun.

March Break Science Camp at the Resource Centre was well attended and greatly appreciated, even a little noisy! Families enjoyed the “no pressure” feel to this drop-in science based playgroup having 2 sessions a day for the different ages groups (one for 1-3 & one for 4 to 7).

Play Dates are Us!



We opened with fun and games but the highlights were creating

ooey, gooey slime

and the volcanic explosion releasing all

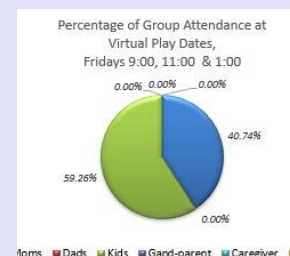
the **Red** lava,

was a cause for great laughter.

The participants were both “Regulars” from our programs along with welcomed new families not

previously connected to the ESFRA family.

This is capacity building at its finest!



Parenting Journey Family Support Program

Our Parenting Journey Home Visiting Program is a community based voluntary family support home-visiting program for families with children ages 0-18 yrs. Support is offered in the following areas: behaviour guidance, relationship building, improving communication, problem solving skills, stress management, advocacy skills, work-life integration/balance, attend appointments, find resources, make referrals and more. During the 2020-2021 Program Year our Parenting Journey Home Visitor supported of 25 families. Please see below for a short synopsis of service delivery.

- Caseload Totals: **14 families**
- Waitlisted (phone support only): **2**
- Number of children/youth impacted: **59 children**
- Families exited: **12 families**
- Average length of participation: **24 Months**



Due to the mandatory closure of the agency the Parenting Journey Home Visitor was still able to provide constant services and support by phone consultation and sharing resources unique to each family's needs (virtual programming, emailing links to webinars, parenting handouts, resources on covid, resources around CERB etc.). Support was even given to an out of province family who's under age youth lived within the Eastern Shore. The PJHV was in constant communication with the youth's parents supporting them to help get the necessary resources and supports in place to her child.



It was very disappointing to have to shut down the Grandparent Support Groups. The Grand Parent Shift supports grandparents who are primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Unfortunately, this program is not continuing at this present time due to the pandemic but we are hoping to resume once we have safely come out of this pandemic.

Parent Education: the PJP HV partnered with Schools Plus to co-design and facilitate a new 3-session parent education program for a parents of teens called, 'Navigating Life with my Teen' to be delivered virtually on Zoom May 2021.

Preschool Screenings: In partnership with Dalhousie School of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The screening process is designed to be fun! It involves a series of play stations using speech-language and pre-literacy (PLS-5, K-SEALS) screening tools. In addition, Audiology students performed a hearing screening for each child. Families received notice from ESFRA Centre staff within a few weeks if the screening indicated that a full speech-language and/or hearing evaluation is warranted.



We are thankful for this great partnership with Dalhousie, a win-win for everyone! Families get a 'snap shot' of their child's development while Dalhousie students get an opportunity to work with our pre-schoolers and gain some testing experience. We are hoping to offer some form of screening in the upcoming year.

Unfortunately, in 2020-2021 we had to again cancel this event due to Covid-19 restrictions but will endeavor to offer this opportunity to our Eastern Shore Communities in the 2021-2022 program year.

ESFRA was featured on Global Morning Live to discuss the screenings and ESFRA services and the impact the pandemic has had with how we support our families (May 2021).



Educational Support: Department of Community Services sent out

● educational support packages of school supplies to ESFRA to help families with children in Pre-Primary to High School to allow for children to continue their studies during the early pandemic lockdown March 2020-June 2020. Families in the Parenting Journey Program, Healthy Beginnings Program, families connected to ESFRA or any family living within ESFRA catchment area (Lawrencetown-Lake Echo – Sheet Harbour) were able to access these. All packages were assembled at ESFRA family centre then either picked up by appointment or delivered directly to families' homes. In total, 50+ packages were circulated into the hands of families along the Eastern Shore. In addition, 2 PJ families (six children) were supported with additional school supplies September 2020, to aid families with financial challenges to equip their children for the upcoming school year (2020-21).

● Food Security:

ESFRA was involved with the Mobile Food Hampers funded by Feed NS to deliver to families in need. 12 families participating in the either PJ or HB programs, received hampers in June 2020.



CHRISTMAS SUPPORT:

ESFRA supported 4 families with Christmas support (gifts and groceries) in 2020.

W

ee Bears is our Signature Parent/Caregiver Interactive Play Group for families with children ages 1 – 3 years.



As with all programs in this 2020-21 year, we got off to a rocky start but managed to have a strong beginning to the winter sessions. Starting with a 4 week Virtual Wee Bear program during January. As conditions

became more favourable, we opened in February for inperson programs.



The video camera is like being on tv.

Unfortunately it was cut short in mid-April, but well attended and greatly appreciated by our young ones. Squeals and tears were had both during and after the 1 hour sessions. Some making sure we knew they didn't want to go home!

ESFRA offered 5 groups of Wee Bears including **1 Virtual** and **4 In person programs** operating out of our **ESFRA Family Centre**.

All together these sessions provided the opportunity for **37** children of families along the Eastern Shore to enjoy participation in this program. Protocols for social distance always striving to be maintained.

Our families which participated in the Virtual program were supplied the craft supply bags for each of the program sessions in advance.



While inside children enjoyed a variety of giggle making experiences such as **pajama days, gardening days, beach days and a myriad of messy art mediums**.

We also included a few special play experiences such as: **sand and water play, musical instruments, parachute play, interactive flannel stories, as well as our Jump Jiggle Jive equipment**.

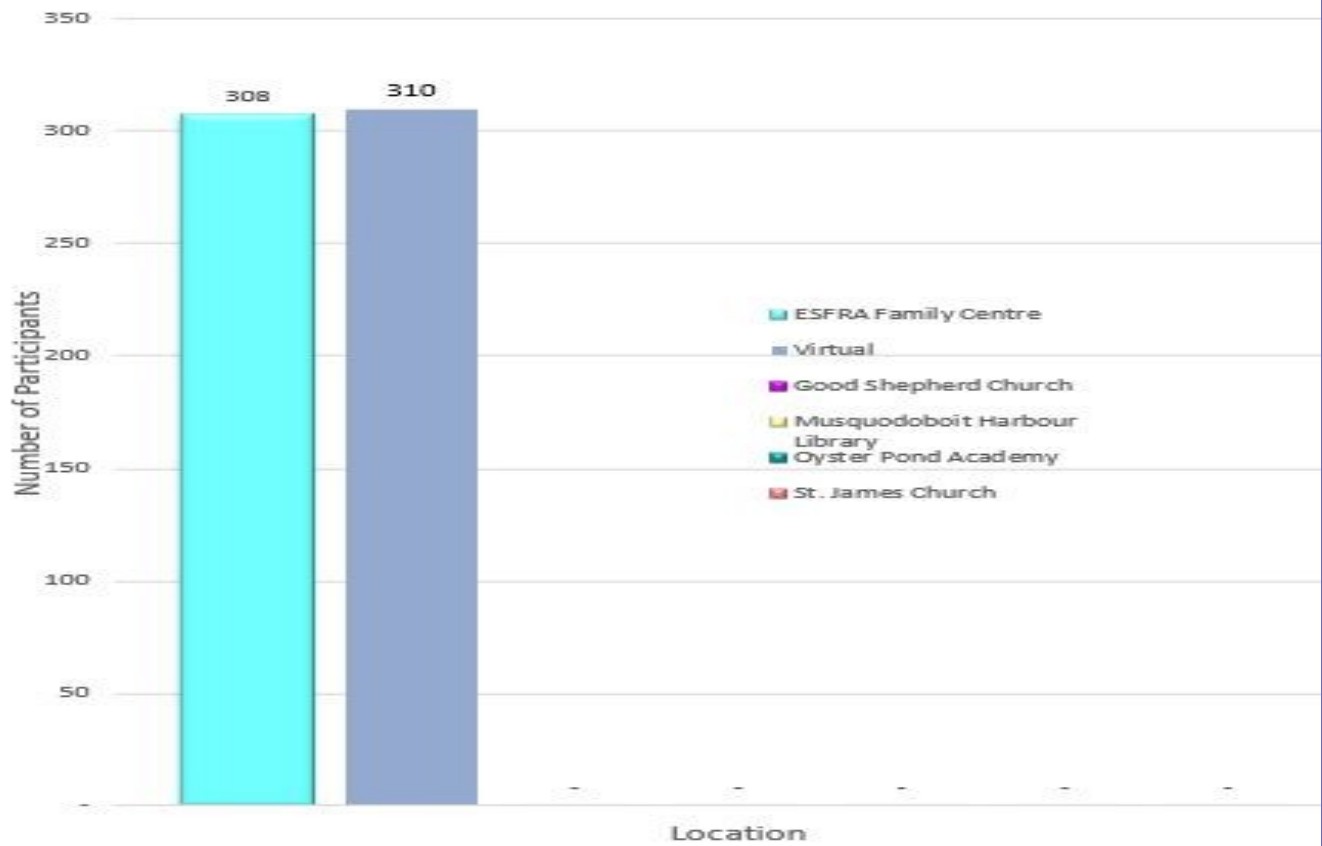
Needless to say fun was had by all!

As a final thought, we would like to acknowledge all the feedback our families have shared. Comments both "favourable" and "ones for further consideration" all have value. And, we appreciate your honesty.

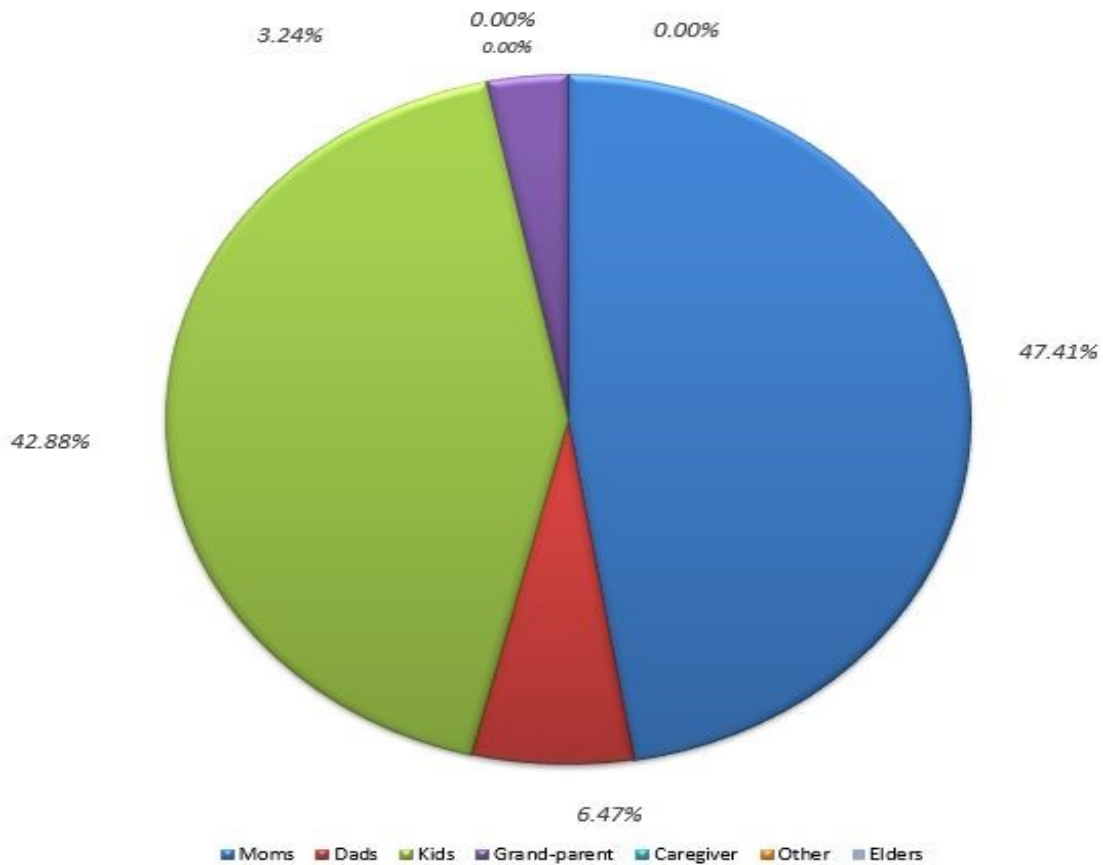
Over the past year, our staff has worked diligently to update programming activities across all our programs, in their respective components, to ensure that variety and creativity emerge, resulting in a positive engagement by parents and children alike.

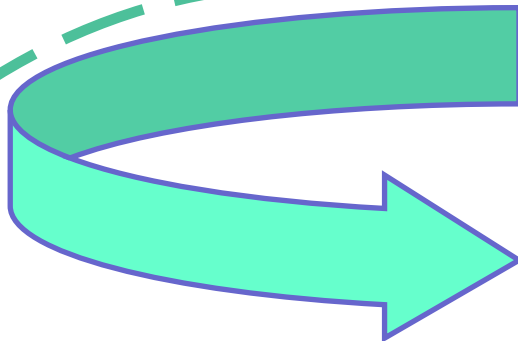


Attendance at ESFRA Locations for 2020 - 2021



Percentage of Group Attendance at All ESFRA Locations for 2020- 2021





Our community development work and strong community partnerships on the Eastern Shore continue to be a major contributing factor in ESFRA's success in recent years.



- * Annual Designated Donations through the United Way



- * Birches Nursing Home

- * Cole Harbour/Eastern HRM Mental Health



- * Councilor David Hendsbee

- * Donations from the community & program participants



- * East Preston Family Resource Centre

- * Eastern Shore Co-operator

- * Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Community Health Board



- * Family Literacy Initiative Endowment Fund

- * Food Banks Canada

- * HRM Community Recreation

- * Kevin Murphy - MLA

- * Local Food Banks





2020 - 2021

Our Executive Director plays a large role in this kind of work and she understands how important it is to strengthen the agency's partnerships with other agencies (both in our immediate area and the greater HRM), schools and service providers in our communities.



Royal Bank of Canada



The Royal Canadian Legion
Eastern Marine Branch 161 Gaetz Brook Nova Scotia



- * Nova Scotia Department of Community Services - major funder
- * Nova Scotia Health Authority - major funder
- * Parents And Children Together
- * Porters Lake Business Association
- * RCMP Musquodoboit Harbour Detachment
- * School's Plus & School Social Worker
- * St. James Anglican Church
- * Tim Horton's – Porters Lake
- * Tracey's Tasty Treats
- * Tri-Communities Social Worker
- * Tri-County Coalition
- * Tru-Path Consulting
- * Twin Oaks Memorial Hospital
- * United Way Recovery



Treat a child as though he already is
the person he's capable of becoming.

- Haim Ginott

